Ling 110A: Phonological Theory

Instructor: Keith Plaster  
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TF: TBD  
TF office hours: TBD  

Course location: TBD  
Times: T,F 12:30pm-1:50pm (Block J)  

**Description and goals:** This course will provide an introduction to phonology, the study of the sound systems of the world’s languages. In the course students will learn about articulatory phonetics, distinctive feature theory, the concept of a "natural class," phonological typology and naturalness, and nonlinear phonological representations.  

**Prerequisites:** Ling 100a (Introduction to Linguistics) or permission of instructor  

**Readings:** Our textbook will be:  


*Please note that this is the new 2nd edition of the textbook. It should be available for purchase in the bookstore by the second week of class.*  

I will also distribute additional required and supplemental readings via LATTE from time to time.  

**Requirements/Grading:**  

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Component</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Homework assignments</td>
<td>40%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quiz</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Midterm</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final exam</td>
<td>20%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final percentage grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
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- **Homework** will generally be assigned on Fridays and due on the following Tuesday.  
  o Homework is due at the beginning of class, and each assignment will be graded on a 10-point scale.  
  o Late homework will be accepted only until I have handed back the graded assignment, provided that one point will be deducted for each day an assignment is late, up to a maximum of 5 points lost. The lowest homework grade will be dropped.
All homework must be typed and submitted in hard copy; due to the many issues that can occur with fonts, assignments may not be submitted by email. The following webpage provides useful information for choosing and using an IPA font: http://www.unc.edu/~jlsmith/ipa-fonts.html. You should feel free to use any IPA font that you prefer so long as it contains all of the characters and diacritics that you need. I especially recommend the SIL Doulos Unicode font, which you may download at: http://scripts.sil.org/doulossil_download.

- **Participation** includes attendance and participation in class.
  - Class attendance is required and participation in class is expected. While you will not be penalized for being quiet in class, I hope very much that you will ask questions and want to participate in class discussions.
  - You may miss up to two classes for any reason. Each additional class missed will result in a reduction of your final percentage grade for the course by 0.5%, up to a maximum of 10% lost.

- The **phonetics quiz** will take place at the end of the section on phonetics, on or about February 5.
- The **midterm** will be an in-class exam. More details to come as the date approaches.
- The **final exam** will take place at the date and time scheduled by the Registrar. More details to come as the date approaches.

**No laptops or cellphones:** Laptops may not be used in class without my prior permission. The use of cellphones is not permitted in class; please keep them put away, and turn them completely off if the buzz of a new message is irresistible.

**Disabilities:** If you are a student with a documented disability on record at Brandeis University and wish to have a reasonable accommodation made for you in this class, please see me immediately.

**Academic integrity:** You are expected to be familiar with and to follow the University’s policies on academic integrity (see http://www.brandeis.edu/studentlife/sdc/ai). Faculty may refer any suspected instances of alleged dishonesty to the Office of Student Development and Conduct. Instances of academic dishonesty may result in sanctions including but not limited to, failing grades being issued, educational programs, and other consequences.

**Working together:** Unless I state otherwise for any particular homework assignment, you may work on the homework with one other person from the class, provided that:

- You must identify the person you worked with at the top of your assignment.
- You may discuss and work through the assignment together, but you each must write up the assignment separately and in your own words.
- Note: sharing answers is not working together!
Schedule (subject to slight modification based on class progress and interests):

Week 1: Introduction to the course and the study of phonology

Weeks 2-4: Part I: Phonetics
- Place of articulation
- Manner of articulation
- Vowels
- Voice
- Waveforms
- Phonetics quiz

Weeks 5-11: Part II: Phonological theory and analysis
- Allophonic relations
- Feature theory
- Underlying representations
- Interaction of phonological processes
- Doing phonological analyses
- Midterm

Weeks 12-15: Part III: Specialized topics
- Phonological typology and naturalness
- Nonlinear representations (tone)
- Final exam

LATTE: Please check the course LATTE site frequently. The course schedule, additional/supplemental readings, and assignments will be posted on the site as we progress through the semester.